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Anarchist news and views from Aotearoa/NZ.....#12 December/January 2000 FREE



vivisectors under siege - the battle of seattle - may day 2000 - and much more

rolling over

A new millennium dawns and nothing much has changed. Predictions of doom and apocalypse and even (shock! horror!) anarchy didn't eventuate.

Society didn't collapse. Electricity and water supplies weren't interrupted. The Y2K bug was a non-event. People stocked up on food and water for no good reason. If only it was so easy for capitalism, patriarchy and the state to collapse overnight.

What the new millennium jitters prove is two things. Firstly, how capitalism can turn an event which many people believe will be calamitous into its own profitable event. For example, the Y2K bug was nothing more than a money making scheme.

And the new millennium celebrations for many were nothing more than watching a fireworks show – a spectacular capitalist show to be passively consumed, preferably on TV from the safety of your own home. How dare people come out and actually try and overcome their alienation in a mass carnival! (though the new millennium wasn't much to



celebrate in the first place – 1000 years of authoritarian, despotic society).

Secondly, the millennium jitters show the extent to which we are still embedded in a Christian society.

Much of the predictions of doom are part of authoritarian Christian mythology. For many Christians, a new millennium signifies the end of the world as we know it, an apocalyptic disaster whereby "evil" will be wiped out, and then the second coming of Jesus Christ himself (hallelujah!!) who will establish a new 1000 year old messianic regime, a veritable heaven on earth (sounds a bit like Hitler's beliefs, doesn't it?).

What is silly about this conception is that we have to look to above, to some supernatural being to come down from the heavens to help us out and change society.

As anarchists have always pointed out, it is people themselves who change society. We need to overcome the Christian ideology of waiting for some outside force to miraculously change society.

Fydd

ANIMAL RESEARCH TAKES LIVES

Humans and Animals BOTH suffer

368-page; hardback; well-indexed; fully-sourced; scientific arguments

Send \$25(includes p&p) to:
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(soe required for other enquiries)
More details: <http://www.nzavs.org.nz>

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..... an 'industrial accident'

Christine Clarke died on December 31, 1999, a few days after being hit by a car as she stood on a picket line at the port of Lyttelton, near Christchurch. Christine had joined the picket in support of waterfront workers who were upset at the port company's plans to use contract labour to load coal at the port.

It's customary when you sit down and write something like this to say lots of good things about the person. I won't bother with that. Christine's friends, family and loved ones cherish her memory. She was a good person.

I read somewhere that she was involved in the cause of social justice for nearly thirty years, beginning with the Progressive Youth Movement, the women's movement and later the Labour and Alliance parties.

Christine was killed defending the rights of working people.

Someone commented that she was the second person killed on a New Zealand picket line, the first being Fred Evans, who was killed at Waihi in 1912.

Of course the reality is that working people are murdered every day the world over daring to stand up for themselves. Every year dozens of New Zealand workers are killed, not by the callous actions of individuals but by a system – capitalism – that ruins and destroys people's lives.

These are what they call "industrial accidents". And then there are the slow, debilitating deaths caused by chemicals, asbestos and other poisons.

But behind the system there are murderers, people who are accountable, people who sit in boardrooms thousands of kilometres away and murder with the stroke of a pen.

Forgiveness? We can only really talk about that after we've slung the bastards out.

Frank

labour-alliance form centre right government

With the election of the Labour-Alliance government late last year, many people are claiming that Labour-Alliance are a "centre left" government, and that the election signifies the end of the extreme New Right revolution in NZ politics. Neither is true.

For the sake of definition, being left wing means one aims to abolish (or at least minimise) wealth and privilege and being right wing the opposite. Right wingers want to increase inequality by increasing the power and privilege of the rich few, whilst left wingers want the opposite.

What Labour-Alliance represent is a centre right government, mildly less right wing than the far right government of Shipley. Many Labour politicians want to copy Tony Blair's right wing British government and his so called "third way", which basically means a watered down version of New Right Thatcherism.

So while we won't get the open bashing of beneficiaries and the poor as we did under Shipley, we will still get the same old New Right,



capitalist friendly government which promotes a low-wage economy and a high level of poverty.

Labour and Alliance are at pains to point out they are business friendly; they want to indicate to capitalists they won't limit their profit margin. Hardly policies one would call left wing.

Labour and Alliance will promote cosmetic changes. This will give them the appearance of being leftish and will buy them popular support amongst liberals. Along these lines they have stopped native forest logging on the West Coast, increased taxes a tiny wee bit for the super rich, and raised the minimum wage.

Just how cosmetic these changes are is indicated by their raising of the minimum wage from a paltry almost third world slave labour level of about \$7 an hour to a paltry almost third world slave labour level of about \$7.50 an hour – a raise that was, in fact, less than the National Government was going to make before it got booted out.

This strategy of a right wing government hiding behind a smokescreen of a few liberal changes sounds familiar, right? In 1984 Labour introduced New Right savagery under the smokescreen of anti-nuclear legisla-

tion. We need not be fooled by this strategy again.

Fydd

pressure on in auckland water wars

On January 17, the Auckland water retail company Metrowater launched a major counteroffensive against the ongoing campaign of boycott and civil disobedience being carried out by the Water Pressure group, who oppose commercialisation of the water service.

In addition to their usual almost-daily restrictions, tap clamping and meter disconnections, Metrowater launched an all-out assault on 16 homes, removing pipes from the mains to meters and hacksawing or otherwise damaging street mains fittings, rendering them unserviceable.

The actions occurred so suddenly

that the Water Pressure group were able to defend only two places from being disconnected in this way. The disconnections saw families across Auckland City – from Point Chevalier to Kohimarama – denied water supplies which they have paid for while refusing to pay their sewerage bills.

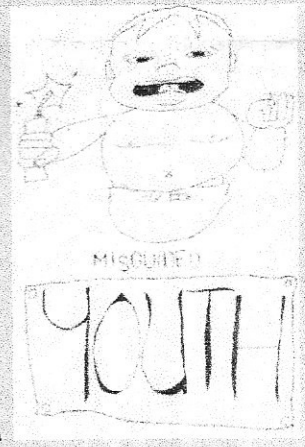
While cutting off over 500 families in the past year, Metrowater has previously resorted to this particularly desperate form of disconnection on only eight occasions, and the Water Pressure group "turn-on squads" have long since reinstated all of those customers – turning off the water mains, fitting new valves and pipes to where the meters had been removed, and finally concreting the whole network into place to deter Metrowater from disconnecting again.

Within 30 minutes of the latest cut-offs the turn-on squads had once again swung into action and most of those families affected were soon back on. Threats of jail and other intimidatory

Photo: The Water Pressure group

It's a regime
enforced with violence
a code of silence
enforced by thieves
Stealing your free speech
and your free thought
an empty corpse
no soul for thee
If i could cast off
these steel shackles
personalized
a pair for each
Student taught here
taught nothing
freedom not
within our reach

Poem and graphic by CAPPA



tactics by Metrowater are simply steeling the resolve of boycotters and fostering solidarity throughout the community. The Water Pressure group is not opposed to conservation measures but will resolutely oppose punitive "charge till it hurts" policies supposedly aimed at cutting consumption. In 1994 the people throughout greater Auckland responded willingly during the water crisis – proving that a socially responsible campaign leaves mere commercial catch-phrases for dead when it comes to conserving water.

Water is vital to life. The Water Pressure group is adamant that water remains the most essential public service and that it should be funded across the community in the traditional way – on the basis of ability to pay.



vivisectors' conference under siege

Anti vivisection campaigners from around Aotearoa/New Zealand gathered in Wellington in late November to protest against a two day vivisectors' conference.

The conference was organised by Anzccart (The Australia and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching) which is an animal research industry front group set up to promote and defend the use of animals in experiments. One hundred and seventy vivisectors attended this year's Anzccart conference at the convention centre in the Te Papa National Museum.

A SPECIAL WELCOME

The day before the conference was due to open, a group of activists charged into the Royal Society building where Anzccart is based. There was a brief but noisy occupation of the building. The activists left before police arrived, taking a box of Anzccart documents with them.

On the morning of November 18, more than forty protesters gathered to welcome the vivisectors as the conference opened. A huge amount of noise was kept up for an hour and a half, and was audible clearly from inside the conference.

Later that day, a group of activists made a surprise visit to the Wellington School of Medicine where thousands of animals are tortured in cancer research experiments. Activists armed with drums and other noise making devices blockaded the foyer of the building and occupied it. The police forced them out 25

minutes later. The protest continued outside the building.

While the police were dealing with that, another smaller group armed with cameras attempted to make a surprise inspection of the lab animal breeding unit at Victoria University across town. Unfortunately they were spotted by security guards before they could gain entry and had to make a quick getaway.

NOISY PROTESTS

That night, the vivisectors hid behind tight security while they had their conference dinner at the Skyline restaurant on a hill above the city. Some activists had managed to get hold of some unknown device that caused very loud explosion type noises. The dinner was disrupted by a bomb threat phone call, followed by two loud bangs. After midnight several loud bangs were set off around the house of Mike Berridge, a well known local vivisector who hopefully had no sleep that night.

On Friday at noon there was another big noisy protest outside Te Papa Museum. Just before activists arrived, some naughty person set off the fire alarms and the building was evacuated. Several fire engines arrived and about 500 people (including the vivisectors) poured onto the forecourt of the museum where the protest was about to begin. Unfortunately the vivisectors had been told to remove their conference badges so we couldn't identify them. Some protesters mingled with the crowd handing out leaflets, while the rest of us kept up the drumming and chanting.

Later on, when the police had re-admitted people into the museum, a group of protesters split off from the main group and marched around to the back of the museum where they could get even closer to where the vivisectors were having their lunch. Detectives from the national Threat Assessment Unit were seen across the road from the protest observing everyone present. The protest ended with only a few minor confrontations.

A few hours later there was a final protest as the vivisectors left the building. A dozen protesters were surrounded and heavily outnumbered by police at this final protest so were unable to do anything but shout at the vivisectors as they left.



ENTER THE ALF

We received reports from the Animal Liberation Front, who were also active during the week. Several Wellington vivisectioners were visited at their homes in the middle of the night just before the conference was about to begin.

Two vivisectioners from the Malaghan Institute, who live together, had their house sloganised and the front window smashed.

John Miller, vivisectioner and head of the Victoria University animal ethics committee (which oversees and approves experiments at the university) had his house covered in ALF slogans, a brick through the front window and his car covered in paint stripper.

And the Royal Society building (where Anzccart is based) was covered in anti-vivisection slogans.

The morning after the conference, a huge "vivisection is scientific fraud" slogan had appeared on the walls of the museum.

Reports from within the conference said the vivisectioners felt under siege for the whole two days. The atmosphere inside the building was one of paranoia as dozens of police and security guards patrolled the conference centre, and security guards prevented the vivisectioners from standing too close to the windows in case protesters threw rocks at them! Word had spread that Wellington vivisectioners were having their homes trashed and every vivisection lab in Wellington had increased security for the week.

The protests were the first time in two years that activists from the length of the country gathered in one place and the grassroots animal liberation movement in Aotearoa is hopefully stronger following the protests



against the conference.

A relatively small group of activists from around the country managed to cause chaos and stress for the vivisection community without suffering any arrests themselves. They also started on plans for more coordination of local anti-vivisection campaigns around the country.

Next year in May, factory farmers from around the world will be in Auckland for the World Pork Expo, and we have started preparing for another national gathering of animal activists to make sure the Expo is another disaster for the animal abusers.

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anarchy on-line

(an irregular column on the web and how to use it)

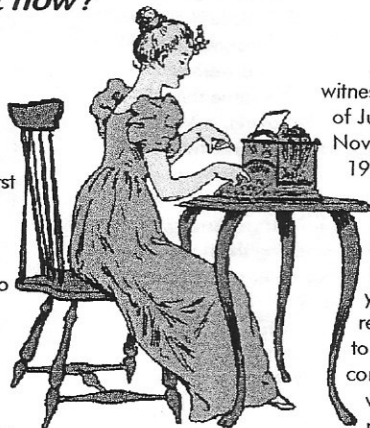
#3: i'm hooked, what now?

OK, so you've faithfully followed the hallowed advice of yours truly and now you're jacked in and ready to turn on. But where to start? The first thing you want to do is start to increase your knowledge about computers – hardware, software, configuration, security etc. You also want to get connected to the anarchist presence on the web. I could publish paperbacks of website addresses, half of which would be out of date by the time this went to print, but instead I'll tell you how to find such things out for yourself.

E - MAIL

In my humble opinion there is no more important aspect of the Internet than the ability to send text, graphics, even music to someone half way around the world in a fraction of a second. Once you have an e-mail address you can subscribe to e-mailing lists at sites like www.onelist.com or www.egroups.com, who host our very own anarchynz list.

Communicating by e-mail allows you to contact free thinkers from around the world and share tips, hints, URLs (website addresses) etc. It also offers the possibility of simple, informal, decentralised and international organisation,



witness the events of June 18 and November 30, 1999.

There

are two main ways to use e-mail. If you have regular access to a secure computer, you will usually be provided with

an off-line e-mail account by your internet provider. This allows you to read and write messages while off-line which are sent and received by your mail program while you are surfing. This is useful if you are paying by time for your access.

If you have only occasional access to the web, or wish to have alternate e-mail avatars (for mailbombing the SIS, infiltrating virtual fascist groups etc) you can use an on-line e-mail account. This is a website which receives and stores your e-mail for you until you claim it with a login name and password, much like a virtual PO Box. Many sites offer free e-mail as a way of attracting more "hits" (the rating system by which commercial servers attract advertisers). Using less

popular ones like www.disinfo.com and ratties.zzn.com avoids the slow response you get when more popular servers are busy. Another way to find e-mail servers leads me onto my next topic...

SEARCH ENGINES

These are on-line databases of information about thousands or millions of websites. Some of the more popular are www.altavista.com and www.hotbot.com, but there are subject and locale specific ones like www.disinfo.com.

A tip for using these: pop down to your local library and familiarise yourself with the on-line catalogue. Engines work on the same principle, referring you to websites instead of books. You can also use engines to search for other engine's. Don't be afraid to try lots and see which give the most satisfying results. And make sure you share your findings around.

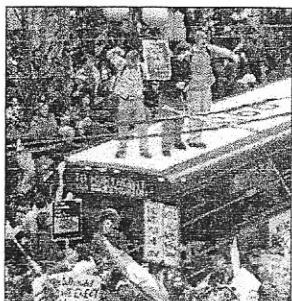
A final word on search engines: if you have a website or homepage, they have no idea it exists unless you enter it into their database! Also, the more links on your page to other good sites, the higher up the list of search results your URL will be. So it pays to exchange links with other webworkers – viva la mutual aid!

Strype

seven days that shook the corporate world

an eyewitness account of the battle of seattle

It started quietly enough on the Sunday with a few hundred people demonstrating outside The Gap over the sweatshop conditions workers have to endure to produce the company's clothes. Then on the Monday there was a demonstration by the turtle posse pointing out how the WTO had ruled America's Endangered Species Act illegal. Later, French national hero Jose Bove, who recently demolished McDonald's, demonstrated outside his favourite store as a protest against US sanctions on French cheese. Things were hotting up. The last thing the US President must have expected was to be flying into a city under a state of emergency with the National Guard on the streets.



"If you were alive, the police gassed you. People coming back from work, kids, women, everyone. People would go out of their houses to see what was happening because these tear gas guns sound like a cannon – and they would get gassed."

TUESDAY

Tuesday morning and already thousands are on the streets blocking roads and stopping delegates from getting into the WTO Conference centre. The opening ceremony is abandoned and talks delayed for more than five hours.

Around 10 am we have a taste of what's to come as riot cops, with three-foot clubs and dressed like Darth Vader, start spraying CS gas into the faces of people peacefully blocking the roads. One man commented, "When the gas masks came out we knew they were planning to use pepper spray on the people sitting down. The crowd was pleading with them. We locked legs and arms and I pulled a bandana over my face, covering my mouth and eyes. People began screaming in pain. I felt a blow from a club, the cops were beating people as well. A police officer pulled my hand away from my face and

pepper-sprayed me in the eyes. The rest of the crowd pulled people to safety and began washing their eyes with a solution of baking soda and water to counter the effects of the blinding pepper spray."

By midday 30,000 trade unionists joined the demonstrations. "I'm not a trade barrier" reads the marching turtles' banner. Giant puppets weave their way down the streets, superheroes slide round corners, cloaks flying, a group of Father Christmases march along waving at the crowd, doubling over with laughter, "WTO? Ho, ho, ho."

A Reclaim The Streets sound system blasts out funk, rappers rhyming "WTO, it's gotta go". SchNEWS meet Mexican, Indian and French farmers, Tibetan refugees, steelworkers, striking cabbies, anti logging and deforestation protesters, all experts on the WTO, its power and its direct repercussions on their lives. These people are no random mob. They have gathered from all over the world to be heard and no matter how many issues are at stake here they speak with one voice, united in their opposition to an institution which has no respect for the ordinary people of the world.

They are calling for an end to sweatshops, to child labour and the erosion of environmental laws and the third world debt. These people are well informed, well organised and determined.

As one Labour correspondent put it, "Ten years ago, who would have thought that Teamsters and kids in dreadlocks would be marching together, let alone under the banner of 'fair trade'? "I never got on with environmentalists until I realised we were all fighting for the same thing," said Dan Petrowski, a Michigan steelworker who was made redundant four months ago. Still, what did that matter to the police who lost patience with the crowd, spraying them with jets of gas like water cannons again and again?

Meanwhile, groups of anarchists went shopping. McDonald's, Niketown, Gap,



the seattle police arsenal

*US military standard M40A1 double canister gas masks;
*uncalibrated, semi-automatic, high velocity Autocockers loaded with solid plastic shot; *Monadnock disposable plastic cuffs;
*Nomex slash-resistant gloves; *Commando boots; *Centurion tactical leg guards; *combat harnesses; *DK5-H pivot-and-lock riot face shields; *black Monadnock P24 polycarbonate riot batons with TrumBull stop side handles; *No.2 continuous discharge CS (ortho-chlorobenzylidene-malononitrile) chemical grenades; *M651 CN (chloroacetophenone) pyrotechnic grenades; *T16 Flameless OC Expulsion Grenades; *DTCA rubber bullet grenades (Stingers); *M-203 (40mm) grenade launchers; *First Defense MK-46 Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) aerosol tanks with hose and wands; *.60 caliber rubber ball impact munitions; *lightweight tactical Kevlar composite ballistic helmets; *combat butt packs; *30 cal. thirty-round mag pouches; *Kevlar body armor.

Starbucks and the American Bank all had their windows smashed. One man from the U.K. told SchNEWS, "Even as a pacifist I was pleased. No-one was hurt. It seemed trivial in comparison to the scenes I had witnessed earlier. This wasn't violence against people, it was violence against the property of some of the world's most hated multinationals."

As early evening approached with the crowds remaining on the streets, and the Clinton administration leaning on the mayor to do something quick, the National Guard were called out for the first time in Seattle in modern times. A no-protest zone and a 12-hour curfew were placed in the downtown area – the first time since the Second World War. This seemed to be the signal for the robo-cops to unleash an arsenal of weapons against anyone who got in their way for the next 24 hours. SchNEWS is used to a bit of argy-bargy with the police but this was something else.

BUTT-PLUGGIN IN THE USA

"Hey! Check it out - these motherfuckers are firing butt-plugs at us," called out one grinning member of the crowd brandishing a two by four inch rubber bullet.

As night drew in the forces of darkness began pushing people into the city's bohemian/gay district, the Capitol Hill residential area. This was way out of the no-protest zone, and it infuriated locals who came out of the streets in their hundreds.

Seattle Gay News takes up the story. "Numerous accounts from witnesses all describe excessive force by



police who appeared to have no real reason to be on Capitol Hill. The area is outside of the curfew and no-protest zones. One resident told us, 'I haven't been marching, but when the cops turn your neighbourhood into a war zone, it's time to get involved.'"

WEDNESDAY

Early morning and the mass arrests begin. If yesterday's show of force by the authorities was meant to scare people from demonstrating then they were mistaken.

Thousands of people are regrouping at a steelworkers rally. People grow restless at the speeches and start leaving for the no-protest zone. "Whose streets? Our streets" everyone chants. One man

explained to SchNEWS what happened next. "Eventually we were pushed onto the main road with shoppers, protesters, cars, buses. They're not going to gas us here, are they? I thought. A second later an explosion followed by a barrage of plastic bullets, gas, pepper spray, concussion grenades. Mental. People sitting in their cars were gassed, people leaving work. Everyone."

The police say they are using non-lethal weapons but one man reports listening to a local radio station when a man calls in weeping - his wife had been attacked by the police while leaving work and she lost their child - she was four months pregnant. A doctor blamed this on the gas.

It's getting scary, the town centre is emptying of people as the curfew approaches. The police are roaming around everywhere, kitted out in the most bizarre Storm-trooper-meets-Ninja-Turtle outfits and riding everything from bicycles to a huge tank-like thing, inappropriately named the Peacekeeper. If you aren't falling head over heels with laughter, your legs are being shot out from under you by rubber bullets!

THURSDAY

Residents and students march, chanting, from Capitol Hill to join a farmers rally. "Ain't no power like the power of the people 'cos the power of the people don't stop".

Thousands then march towards the County Jail where hundreds of protestors are being held, most not giving even their names. The jail is surrounded by people holding hands. A Temporary Autonomous Zone is established as people keep vigil, sleeping, eating, making music and speeches demanding the release of our brothers and sistas.

A party evolves outside the jail as people drum, sing, juggle and dance, chanting "This is what democracy looks like". At the windows we can see the silhouettes of prisoners arms waving as they dance in solidarity.

FRIDAY EVENING

These people just don't give up. A couple of hundred have gathered at the Westin Hotel to support some people who have d-locked themselves to the hotel's entrance.

It's here that SchNEWS hears the news - the talks have collapsed. There will be no millennium round. It doesn't quite sink in.

Inside the Conference centre, the delegates from the poorer countries complained that they were being sidelined, while the world's elite held secret "green room discussions". Most of the world's poorest countries have neither the capacity nor the means to implement even the previous round of talks which finished five years ago, let alone take on board a whole new round of negotiations, and couldn't even afford to have a permanent representative in Geneva where the rolling talks are held. (30 countries couldn't even afford to send delegates to Seattle!)

SchNEWS

mayday 2000

Following on from the successes of June 18 and November 30 last year, plans are underway for a third Global Day of Action against Capitalism on May 1, 2000.

May 1 will continue the process of building up a strong, bold, and creative grassroots movement against the exploitation and

oppression of people, communities, and the environment, and for solidarity, co-operation, grassroots democracy, and ecological sustainability. It will foster networking and shared organizing within our communities. Diverse issues can often be considered from the point of view of a comprehensive critique of the capitalist system, so May 1 will be a good opportunity to bring separate struggles and actions together.

As on previous occasions, people of different movements and different countries will join forces on this day against the social, political, and economic institutions of the capitalist system. Workers, the unemployed, students, trade unionists, peasants, the landless, fishers, women's groups, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, peace activists, environmental activists, ecologists, and so on will work in solidarity with one another in the understanding that their various struggles are not isolated from each other.

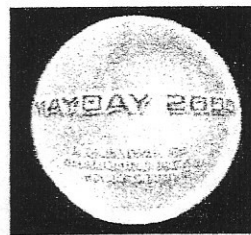
The simultaneous occupation and transformation of the capitalist social order around the globe - in the streets, neighbourhoods, fields, factories, offices, commercial centres, financial districts, and so on - will

strengthen mutual bonds at the local, national, and international levels.

As before, the day will be organised in a non-hierarchical way, as a decentralised and informal network of grassroots groups that employ non-authoritarian, grassroots democratic forms of organisation, struggle independent of the social, political, and economic institutions of the capitalist system, and seek to effect change directly through their own action.

For further information on activities planned for Aotearoa, see the NZ May Day 2000 website at: <http://www.angelfire.com/vw/nzmayday2k/> NZMayDay2000.html

You can also join the NZ May Day 2000 e-mail list by sending a blank e-mail to NZMayDay2k-subscribe@onelist.com.



activists greet guests at world economic forum

More than 1,000 anti-free trade activists defied a protest ban and staged a hectic demonstration at a gathering of the world's political and corporate elite in the Swiss alpine resort of Davos on January 29.

Some of the protesters – including environmentalists and anarchists – broke windows at a McDonald's restaurant and vandalised several cars. Others burned an American flag they had pulled down from the facade of a luxury hotel where most of the world leaders are staying, and used police barricades to try to break the hotel's windows.

"But at least Davos didn't become a second Seattle," said local government president Peter Aliesch in reference to the riots during December's World Trade Organization meeting.

Two police officers were injured, though not seriously, officials said.

The protests took place outside the site where President Clinton delivered a speech to the gathered leaders. After several hours and under increasingly heavy snow, the protesters dispersed with the cry "We'll be back!" and some of them singing the Communist anthem, the Internationale.

Swiss President Adolf Ogi criticized the skirmishes. "The use of force is extremely regrettable," he told journalists. The World Economic Forum, which organises the Davos meeting, deplored that "a limited number of demonstrators chose violence over dialogue."

Despite having declared a ban on all protests during Clinton's visit and calling out troops for extra backup, authorities made no attempt to stop the first demonstrators as they entered the long narrow main street through the village. But they then

seemed to be taken by surprise as an estimated 1,300 protesters pushed through control barriers.

Firing warning shots, security forces retreated to less than 500 metres from the conference centre and hotel hosting Clinton. They then barricaded off the street with land cruisers equipped with huge metal grids to prevent further disruption. Clinton was in the hotel at the time, conducting business.

The critics say they have the same concerns about the World Economic Forum as about the World Trade Organization: that it is undemocratic, secretive and only concerned with maximizing commercial profits. They say that vital deals and decisions are struck behind closed doors with little consideration shown to public concerns, for example on genetically modified foods.

Radical French farmers' unions, which have campaigned against McDonald's in France and the globalisation it represents and which were out in force in Seattle, were among the protesters.

Many of the demonstrators were clad in ski gear to escape official attention. Others were masked and belonged to anarchist groups. An AP photographer was roughed up as he took a picture of a demonstrator felling a police officer with a cross country ski.

AP



mexican student strikers under attack

One person was killed and 37 others injured in clashes between police and striking students at the campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) recently.

Thousands of students at the university have been striking since early 1999 to show their opposition to the neoliberal policies of the Mexican government and the IMF, in particular the privatisation of education and the introduction of tuition fees. Free access to public education (including post-secondary) is guaranteed under the Mexican constitution, yet the UNAM authorities are attempting to impose tuition fees – something that would deny many impoverished students access to post-secondary education.

The latest violence began when 200 students opposed to the strike forced their way onto the campus, tossing rocks and waving sticks as they forced the strikers to abandon the buildings they have held and barricaded since April 20.

Soon after, 150 people identified by the university rector as members of the university's security force arrived to help the anti-strikers defend the campus. But by late afternoon, more strikers arrived and they were able to retake the campus.

One man died from stab wounds to the chest. At least four others suffered skull fractures. Three striking students were arrested outside the school and charged with possession of gasoline bombs.

Four hundred federal police officers later took control of the school. They rounded up the strikers without resistance and took 148 of them to jail.

Throughout the strike the students have received support from the EZLN and from labour unions who also oppose the neoliberalisation of Mexico. Last year the rector of the university – a close friend of President Ernesto Zedillo – was forced to resign over the strike.

